



Filbert Meadows Park

WORKSHOP #1 MEETING REPORT November 18, 2004

Workshop time: 6:30 to 8:00pm

Workshop location: Spring Creek Elementary School cafeteria, 560 Irvington, Eugene

Workshop facilitator: Robin Hostick

Other City staff present: Philip Richardson, Scott Milovich

BACKGROUND

City of Eugene Parks Planning staff hosted the first of two or three neighborhood workshops to discuss upcoming improvements to Filbert Meadows Park. The 3.3-acre park site was purchased in 1999 using funds from the Parks and Open Space bond measure passed in 1998 by area residents. Improvements to the park are funded by parks SDC's (Systems Development Charges). The workshop included a presentation on the project, the process, and the context of the park. This was followed by a general, informal discussion of issues and ideas relating to park improvements. Goals for the evening included 1) providing information to the neighborhood, and; 2) gathering ideas for a new park development plan. Turnout was very good, with over 40 neighbors attending the workshop.

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement for workshop #1 included the following:

- A postcard invitation was mailed on November 9 to about 1200 Santa Clara residents within approximately 1/2 mile of the park
- Personal postcard invitations were mailed to around 100 other interested parties and stakeholders, including neighborhood leaders and elected officials
- An article on the event was included in the November 11 issue of the Council Newsletter
- A news release was distributed on November 11
- The workshop was included on the City Manager's Office public meetings calendar
- The workshop was included on the Parks and Open Space online schedule of events
- The workshop was announced in the City/Region section of the Register Guard preceding the event

PRESENTATION

Meeting participants convened at the Spring Creek Elementary School cafeteria. A slide presentation was delivered, covering an overview of park projects in Santa Clara, funding sources, process and time line for Filbert Meadows improvements, case studies of other neighborhood parks recently built in Eugene, and an analysis of the Filbert Meadows park site.

Basic elements of a neighborhood park were outlined, including overall policies around development level of various park types (what's in, what's optional, what's out), to help frame the discussion.

The planning process was outlined briefly. It was explained that comments and ideas generated at this first workshop would guide the design process. A draft concept plan based on these ideas will be presented at the second workshop, and if need be, refined and presented again at a 3rd workshop. No design work took place prior to the first workshop. The schedule was given for park construction in the summer and fall of 2006.

The existing park site was reviewed in detail, including a description of major elements such as relationships to the neighborhood, existing trees, etc. In general, it was explained that the site is predominantly open and flat, with a remnant orchard of filbert trees, including three walnut trees, occupying about 25% of the park site to the east. Recently constructed homes abut the site to the N, E and W. To the south, a working filbert orchard remains in private ownership. Staff and participants were not aware of any existing plans to change the use of the filbert orchard to the south, although concern was expressed that the park design should plan for the eventuality of the orchard being replaced by homes in the future.

DISCUSSION

An informal and productive discussion was held around issues and ideas for the park. All participants had an opportunity to share ideas and comments. Participants were asked to list issues, concerns, ideas, preferences, etc. for improvements to the park. A list is provided following this summary for a more detailed report of participant comments.

The participant group was clearly unified behind the idea that the park design should **incorporate the remnant filbert/walnut orchard**. Questions were raised around the health, longevity, and maintenance of the filbert trees. Staff agreed to work with Urban Forestry to assess the trees and report back at the next workshop regarding health, viability, disease potential, etc. The natural aspects of the orchard area seemed to appeal to the group, as an area where picnicking (in the shade of the larger walnut trees), walking, and informal play could occur. Concern was expressed about the density of the filbert trees, and that both access and visibility would be limited without careful and frequent pruning of the filbert trees - something parks maintenance would not have the capacity to do with current funding. It was suggested that the orchard could be thinned (perhaps every other tree removed), or otherwise modified to address this. Other concerns focused on keeping the trees dense as a buffer to homes on the east side of the park.

Participants unanimously supported basic park improvements such as a children's playground, picnic areas, benches, paths, etc. Support was also clearly expressed for a soft-surface walking path around the park, land forms such as small hills or berms to provide interest and play, natural play elements (rocks, logs, or other creative features), small habitat areas or features, perhaps including standing water (such as vernal pools), and an open, informal play area with well-graded (smooth) lawn. Discussion of lights, shelter, and an informal basketball court resulted in some neighbors expressing strong support and some expressing concern.

Generally, lights were decided to be a lower priority, but that providing an option for future addition of lights would be the favored option. Concern about possible negative use could be mitigated by lights, according to principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), although most neighbors agreed that negative use of the park had not been an issue. Some reports of negative use in the adjacent (working) filbert orchard, such as ATV and paintball use, were reported.

Some participants supported a shelter as a venue for picnics and informal neighborhood gatherings, and some expressed concern over cost, possible negative uses, and compatibility with a low-key park. Reasons to provide a shelter included shade, protection from rain, convenient seating, and providing a "focus." Suggestions included placing the shelter (or other observation point) on higher ground to facilitate observation of the rest of the park site, and placing picnic areas in the shade of existing walnut or filbert trees in lieu of a shelter.

Some participants were very supportive of a small, informal basketball court, and others were opposed, predominantly on grounds of noise and possible use by skateboarders (which also generates noise). Suggestions included mitigating the noise by locating the court in the lower, south corner of the park away from homes, or using berms along the street. It was mentioned that limiting visibility of this area, in both cases, would not be recommended, although there may be ways to minimize impacts of the facility. Reasons cited for providing basketball included offering children safe opportunities for this activity (as opposed to playing in the street), and offering activities for middle-school age children for whom children's playgrounds are no longer attractive. It was explained that a basketball court, as well as skate facilities, offer something to a broader age range, thereby contributing to the "multi-generational" aspect of the park.

Concern was expressed around the lack of on-street parking around the park. It was pointed out that there are "no parking" signs around the perimeter of the park, indicating that parking would only be available in very limited areas in front of homes facing the park. Staff agreed to follow up on this issue and report back at the next workshop. On-street parking would be adequate for the needs of the park, however if this is not available, other options will need to be explored.

Nearly all participants favored some form of expression, artistic or otherwise, of the agricultural history of the site. Specific suggestions were made around interpretation, art, and preservation of the orchard, to capture this as a central theme for the park.

The following is a general list of comments and ideas presented by participants during the workshop.

ISSUES

General

- Sound impacts on adjacent homes
- Questions about future of orchard to south
- Hard to find park - ideal location
- If orchard is developed into housing - keep in mind during planning
- Desire to buy more land, add to park

Negative Use

- Barriers to cars driving through? Try not to create obstacles for legitimate users
- Current usage - paintball and other negative uses (of orchard) - vacant lot vs. park inspire different uses, adding positive uses, have conversations with kids

Budget and Funding

- Oakmont Park play area - is budget here comparable?
- Budget - is money there? Yes

Traffic and Parking

- Traffic calming - who to talk to?
- Pedestrian crosswalk on Lynnbrook
- Concern about parking - size of service area
- Parking comparable to Awbrey or Skyview

Trees and Environment

- Filbert trees - takes about 25% of site
- Filbert trees - keep, but what about health and lifespan?
- One walnut lost in last wind storm
- EWEB power line, 25' easement - trees there don't grow high enough to be a concern
- Any historic wetlands? No hydric soils
- Filberts - can they be removed if more facilities are needed later? Yes if hazard, sick, or new plans created w/neighborhood input
- Maintenance plan for filberts (thin for visibility - reduce maintenance? Replacement plan with other species, or increase species diversity)
- Better keep one filbert because of the park name!

IDEAS

Facilities/Design

- Provide vantage point - near shelter/play area
- Landforms - add interest, visibility (site is flat)
- Perimeter pathway for jogging, walking, access, w/benches
- Water in some form - pond, play feature, aesthetic feature (self-maintaining), habitat

- Sports field - large open space for informal field play
- Creative play features
- Provide shade trees
- Best site for play area? Visible, not in middle of open space, safety (away from intersection and back from street), streets in area tend to have slower traffic
- [plant] trees along south edge - don't assume orchard will stay
- Natural play features
- Lights? Discourage spooky users/safety; could encourage night use; not good existing street light coverage; costly; can be set to go on/off (off at 10 or 11pm); allow for future add-in
- Picnic shelter? Yes (shade/rain), for large group meetings (sim. To Irwin)
- Picnic tables - in orchard where it's shady
- Fire pit? Check regulations
- Basketball? Noise (place on south edge); skateboard use likely; might reduce number of neighborhood residential hoops in play; different age group use; not full court - use smaller size; possible multi-use w/skateboard seat wall; basketball and skateboarding safer in park than in street
- Fence along south side? Not recommended, may contribute to problems
- Acknowledge history of site through design, features (prairie, agriculture, farming, orchard)

FINDINGS

The high response and diverse viewpoints offered at the workshop suggest a reasonable representation of the neighborhood's values and needs. Based on feedback thus far it is clear that there is a strong opinion in favor of creative development of basic neighborhood park facilities, and the sensitive examination of several design options for lights, shelter and basketball, perhaps as options. Design options should emphasize preserving and enhancing the orchard, mitigating impacts to adjacent homes, and providing unique and diverse recreation opportunities (i.e. creative play areas).

CLOSING

Participants were reminded that there will be at least one more public meeting for Filbert Meadows Park in January 2005, and were encouraged to watch the City/Region section of the newspaper as well as their mailbox for invitations to this event. It was explained that, at the next workshop, participants will be able to respond to a park design that will be created based upon discussions and priorities from today's event. Participants or other interested parties are welcome to discuss the project or submit comments at any time via phone, email or delivered mail.

ATTENDEES:

The following parties attended the workshop:

Chad Banks	Ellen & Mort Hyman	David Rhodes
Kevin & Doris Boyan	Velma Lee	Wanda Simmons
Julie Crooks	Don Leslie	Roger & Pat Smith
Lynn and John Dotson	David Linstrand	Richard & Jean Smith
Fred Engle	Dave McKenna	Nikki & David Thaut
Vanessa Fadjo	Mitchell Morgan	David & Rebecca
Jerry Finnigan	Charles Moss	Thompson
John Fontaine	Norma Pable	Mil & Evelyn Thompson
Marie Gray	Kate Perle	Gary Voorhies
Lonnie Haelchm	Murray Petitt	M. Yinger
Rob Handy	John & Maureen Procopio	Magie Yokum
	Lee Rademacher	Rhonda Zoller

COMMENTS SHEETS

The following comments were recorded on comment sheets provided at the workshop and turned in to City staff at the end of the event.

Total comment sheets handed in at meeting: 8

Total comment sheets handed in following the meeting: 3 email letters

1. *In what ways do you think Filbert Meadows Park can benefit you, your neighborhood, or your community?*
 - I plan to walk, sit, lay on the grass, play catch, frisbee
 - A place for people to take time to walk, read, enjoy the air, trees, flowers. Nothing loud or that will attract crowds, please.
 - Create a meeting space, play space for local residents and children
 - Pathway, recreation for kids. We have a large number of preschool and elementary kids in the area who need off-street play space
 - Place to play, and relax, and add nice feel to community
 - A great place for kids to play. Also, advantageous as a place for adults to meet and socialize.
2. *What do you feel are some of the most important issues facing the park?*
 - Keep it attractive and quiet, and enjoyable for nearby residents. No cars parked in front of residents' houses.
 - Challenges related to the orchard on the south side. Any basketball plan should consider berms or other means of sound abatement.
 - Good utilization of area within the UGB to meet the park/person ideals
 - Create/keep green barrier along powerlines; create some visual interest in flat site
 - Having things in it that satisfy the whole community.
 - Are any improvements to be made regarding parking? Naismith Blvd. Has parking on only 1 side of the street.

3. *What existing features or aspects of the park site do you like most, or feel should be preserved?*
- The trees on the east side; the agricultural heritage (filbert orchard)
 - Definitely keep the existing orchard trees. Keep the lighting the same - street lighting only. We don't want to attract night life. We would like the majority of the land to remain an open grassy area.
 - Location . . . some existing trees should remain. Thinning of trees could leave remaining area with a more "organic", less structural feel than it has now.
 - An orchard space on easterly side, for shady spot. Disagree about pruning back tree count. Deal with trees gradually. Not easy to replace what we have. Also good natural picnic spot.
 - Keep trees, and spaciousness
 - Save filbert orchards on east side of park.
4. *What do you think needs to be improved or changed most?*
- Add ponds - all natural feel
 - Landscaping
 - Make people keep their animals on leash and pick up after them; need to mow more often - right now is too weedy and it spreads to our lawns
 - More trees scattered throughout the park in addition to the open areas
5. *What are some of the activities and/or facilities you would like to see happen in the park?*
- Walks on back trail suitable for walking. Some lighting is necessary w/automatic on/off capability. Fountains or some sort of water feature would be nice.
 - A sheltered area is needed. Parking facilities in the park. Benches for sitting.
 - Play structure. Covered picnic tables.
 - Picnicking
 - Shade trees, benches, paths; a small play area back away from street (corner by trees); lots of plants, trees to buffer the park edges
 - Elevation transitions like were done at Oakmont; transitional areas from trees or natural areas to lawn like found at Awbrey or Washburn Park. Walking paths, bike racks, water, art, sculpture, etc.
6. *What other considerations are important for the success of this park?*
- Maybe a few internal parking spots so as to reduce street parking. We live right across the street and really don't want cars by our house.
 - Planning for the development that may happen on the south side.
7. *Any other comments?*
- I am here mainly to support the idea of smaller neighborhood parks as opposed to the 77 acre park and development outside the UGB. Well done.
 - Really cool ideas! Thanks! I vote for no basketball courts, too noisy!
 - Can the park dept. maintain the filbert trees like they would be in an orchard?

OTHER COMMENTS AND IDEAS

The following written ideas were turned in to staff during or following the workshop:

11-18-04 re: Filbert Meadows Park - North Irvington Drive

Stepping stone paths: educationally with interesting value to all

Foot prints or drawings:

Local animals: OR State beaver, opossum, squirrel

Local birds: OR State western meadowlark, ducks, quail, pheasant

Local fish: OR State chinook salmon, trout, bass

Local flower: OR State Oregon grape

Local tree: Or State Douglas fir, filberts

Local plants: poison oak, blackberries

Local insect: OR State swallowtail butterfly, mosquitos, honeybees

Robin,

1. I have been thinking about the idea of celebrating the ag. heritage of that land and ways to effectively fold it into design without the use of signage. The average suburbanite won't get the inference if it isn't spelled out in some way, but how to subtly achieve that?

What about the idea of the informal picnic areas in the filberts having tables that had verbage and imagery to relay that idea. They could be a stone or concrete surface with sand blasted text and imagery. They could employ the iron work of David Thompson, son of Melvin who sold you the property and who grew up there. He has an interest in this location and is an accomplished and well respected iron artist.

The table tops would be something people discover more slowly, more akin to the pace that nature provides. The surfaces could be utilized for doing rubbings by children as well as the usual table function.

Thanks for listening,

Question 1:

1. A great place for family and friends to get together in our immediate area. It will bring the neighborhood together.

Question 2:

Noise concerns for nearby homes. Trouble-maker element that hangs out in the orchard.

Question 3:

Keep some (majority) of the trees on the east side for a picnic area. Thin some trees so that small children can be watched on nearby playground equipment.

Question 4:

The terrain - needs some mounding.

Question 5:

Love all of the features of Oakmont Park: play structure, sand, water feature, basketball, paths, open grassy area, benches, tables, shade trees. Something for all ages, but especially for the neighborhood kids.

Question 6:

Could we get speed bumps in front of the park on Naismith to encourage slower speeds and keep it safe for the kids at the park?

Question 7:

Lighting (lower along the paths) on timers would be nice if there is extra money in the budget.

Thank you for your time and presentation on our park. I look forward to seeing what you come up with for the next meeting.

Robin,

1. Hello. My wife and I attended last night's neighborhood workshop regarding Filbert Meadows Park. We were the younger couple (to your right facing the group, second table back). I wanted to add to what the gentleman at our table said in regards to the way you handled the workshop. We found your tone and presentation to be spot-on and would like to commend you on the way you lead the group. Having said that, we'd like to add our two cents worth, so here it is.

1. In what ways do you think the park can benefit you, your neighborhood, or your community?

Clearly, this park --even in its existing status-- adds to quality of life. We recently moved in to one of the houses directly facing the park on Naismith and specifically bought that property due to its closeness and serenity in regards to this open space. The park adds pride to the community, provides an outlet for people to get out and get some fresh air, and allows the younger ones to partake in unbridled fun and sporting activities.

2. What do you feel are some of the most important issues facing the park?

I think you probably sensed the concerns many exhibited at the workshop regarding the filbert trees. While it is out of the scope of the park itself (that is, the trees to the south), it is an important consideration as --at some point-- that land will probably be sold. But as far as the park itself, the issues at hand are to find a common mold of what the future of the park will be. It's important that the park be surrounded by structures (whether they be man-made or otherwise), which do not a lot of maintenance involved. It's important that the park --as it gets developed-- not become something it should not. In my mind, that is that it should not become commercial in nature but that it follows in nature's form.

3. What existing features or aspects of the park site do you like most, or feel should be preserved?

The openness of it! The filbert trees! Assuming we keep the trees to the east (which we're for), we're only talking about a 2.5-acre park (roughly). So, as I mentioned at the workshop, it's crucial that we keep a

large part of it open for activities such as informal games of soccer, football, frisbee, etc. There's a serene quality --a sleepiness I believe someone said-- to the park, which combined with its tucked-away location needs to stay true.

4. What do you think needs to be improved or changed most?

Obviously, the grounds need to be improved so to have quality grass or sod to make for a good playing service.

5. What are some activities and/or facilities you would like to see in the park?

For us, keep-it-simple applies here. That is, we'd like a natural facility that does not include a lot of structures or man-made entities. If those were to exist, I feel they should be worked into the east side, adjacent to the filbert and walnut trees there. Also --and as you noted-- we don't love the idea of a basketball court, but if one was to be built, we think having it in the southeastern corner would be the way to go. I would like to see a children's area but a more natural one than at Oakmont. We talked about logs and such and that it is a possibility. Also, I've seen exercise and training parks made out of natural logs, stones, and such and those are pretty cool. Another idea we had but didn't think of during the meeting is a beach. Sounds pretty strange but could be pretty neat butted against some natural water features. I'm not talking sand-in-a-box here. A somewhat long beach area that people could sit or play in and be close to some water. I don't know how others would feel about that but it could be pretty cool if done right. I think a no-brainer for this park is a path that goes around the whole perimeter of the park. Hopefully, the trail or path could be natural in nature and could pass historical plaques in certain areas giving a history of the grounds. We see a lot of people sort of doing this walk now and it could be even better if there was a nice trail and maybe some subdued lighting on it. We also like the idea of some carved grassy areas but as mentioned earlier, keeping that main open space. For the record, we are adamantly against a fire pit and really don't love the idea of a shelter to hold 25-30 people and a grill. For our money, shelters and grills exist at your house and the park is for something different.

6. What other considerations are important for the success of this park?

We should not go overboard to add features for features' sake. We should continue to share dialogue and be open to new and creative ideas. That we preserve the calmness of the current space.

7. Any other comments?

Not really. Again, we're happy to be part of the neighborhood and obviously will benefit immensely from you and your team's hard work going forward. We look forward to the next workshop!

Happy Holidays,